

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

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SUBJECT: (Optional)

Monthly Report -- London Bureau

FROM:

Chief, Operations Group

EXTENSION

NO

DATE

August 1988

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TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

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COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1.

C/MOD

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C/Computer Operations

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FORM 1-79

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service
THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group
FROM : Acting Chief, London Bureau, FBIS
SUBJECT : Monthly Report -- London Bureau -- August 1988

I. GENERAL

1. [] assumed duties as Acting General Manager, BBC Monitoring effective 22 August in preparation for [] departure on 26 August. At the same time, [] was appointed Management Support Officer, assuming line management responsibility for administration, personnel, marketing, EAU and the library until a new general manager is named and in place. Along with the change in leadership the BBC Monitoring Service also underwent a name change and will henceforth be referred to as BBC Monitoring. The BBC External Services has also changed its name to the BBC World Service. STAT
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2. The dollar continued to hold its own remaining at around \$1.70 to the pound for much of the month. While this is good news for the budget, the attempts by the UK Government to keep the pound steady and control inflation by increased interest rates are beginning to have an adverse impact on rental costs.
3. Bureau staff attended a farewell reception for outgoing BBC General Manager [] on 25 August and, to keep memories of FBIS alive, presented him with a large picnic basket containing all of the required equipment and ingredients for the perfect FBIS-approved American martini. STAT
4. Islamabad: The unit had an eventful month with the deaths of Pakistani President Zia and the U.S. Ambassador in a plane crash on the 18th. Earlier in the month, unit operations were temporarily disrupted when an earthquake measuring 6 on the Richter Scale caused a total power outage from 0903-1340 GMT. No harm came to the Unit or its staff.
5. A development which may be of interest to the many TDY'ers who pass through the UK is the elimination of pub closing hours during the day giving landlords the option of remaining open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday and staying open an extra hour for Sunday daytime sessions. The BBC Club, fortunately, has opted to retain the traditional closing time.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Editorial/Monitorial

1. Hopes for a break in the workload with the arrival of the traditionally quiet month of August were dashed with the outbreak of strikes in Poland, seven speeches by Libyan leader Al-Qadhafi and numerous speaking appearances by Afghan leader Najibullah. Once again daily average wordage for the bureau was higher than for any August in bureau history. Chief/Operations Group praised the bureau for its voluminous, timely filing and "spot-on" selection of Polish material.

2. .. problem with lateral consumer computers surfaced during the month which forced the bureau to begin adding a space to all combinations of the letters "ZCZ" appearing in copy. State Department computers were terminating items containing those letters. The problem became noticeable during the height of reporting on this month's Polish strike when the town of Szczecin and Polish Interior Minister Kiszczak were heavily featured.
3. The initial report from Madrid radio of a coup in Guatemala resulted in a CRITIC being issued, but was not supported by further reportage. The bureau's regularly scheduled Internet relay of the Madrid TVE 1830 GMT newscast was extended to overnight coverage, which the BBC also used in an attempt to confirm the earlier report.
4. Chief PM [] and media specialist [] attended second meeting of the FBIS/BBC terminology standardization committee on 10 August. The committee discussed points related to Russian translation initiated at the first meeting and economic terms questioned by FBIS Terminology Coordinator []. Both organizations agreed to update a list of "agreed translations" before the next meeting. STAT
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5. BBC Newsroom expressed thanks to PMU for its timely translation of a 9-take Solomentsev interview in the 19 August PRAVDA detailing the work of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo commission studying material related to the "repressions" of the 1930s, 1940s and early 1950s.
6. The determined efforts of Senior Administrative Assistant [] to obtain from the U.S. Embassy in Paris a fax copy of the 14 August JOURNAL DE DIMANCHE enabled PMU media analyst [] to respond to a request for the 1,000-word interview with Abu 'Iyad. STAT
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B. Coverage

1. Sudan coverage was carefully coordinated throughout the month with Jordan, Nicosia and EAU in the wake of the severe flooding which caused major national disruptions. BBC intercepted a speech by the Sudanese prime minister on 22 August carried by Omdurman Television on the 21.SW Intelsat, but otherwise very little Sudanese reportage was carried owing to flooding disrupting the facilities of SUNA, Omdurman radio and TV, and, presumably, the satellite ground station.
2. BBC attempts to monitor Omdurman radio and TV from satellite during the month were further disrupted when the Versatec plotter on the AFP Pressfax equipment suffered a major failure and the 10M satellite antenna had to be diverted to the 53E Gorizont to pick up a strong Pressfax signal for the Pressfax wet process and Headquarters. Nicosia attempted to cover Sudan from satellite on 23 and 24 August until the Versatec plotter was fully restored on the 25th.
3. London/BBC assumed coverage of Tehran Domestic Service early morning newscasts and Moscow Peace & Progress in Persian through 18 August during the leave of one of Nicosia's Persian monitors. We also assumed coverage of the Iranian clandestine Flag of Freedom radio and Moscow in Dari to Afghanistan 22 August through 5 September when Tel Aviv's sole Persian/Dari monitor is on leave. Finally, BBC took on responsibility for late night Cairo MENA Arabic flash coverage from 12 through 22 August at Nicosia Bureau's request.

4. It was announced early in the month that the UK Foreign Office has approved funding for an 11-meter Ku-Band dish to be installed at Crowsley Park primarily for coverage of Tehran radio and TV. Date for expected installation is still to be determined. Meanwhile, the two 11-meter C-band dishes at Crowsley Park are still not operational owing to continuing problems with the computer-controlled tuning system.

C. Lateral Services

1. At the behest of GMMS, bureau coordinated with Bangkok Bureau to arrange a daily phone feed to the Bush House Burmese section of the 1330 GMT Rangoon Domestic Service newscast. A letter of appreciation from Bush House has been passed to Bangkok Bureau.
2. NEAD passed on consumer appreciation for a videotape of a UK TV documentary on a communist guerrilla raid on a Philippine town.

D. Communications

1. There was a sigh of relief in the Communications Unit when the problem with truncated messages arising from the commo upgrade was resolved on the 24th with the loading of updated software from Headquarters. Another cause for relief was the receipt of updated CAASR software which should greatly facilitate wirefiling of the Monthly Production Report in the proper format.
2. The Communications Unit systems manager has created batch files to provide daily and weekly backup for transmitted messages. Each workstation contains at least 21 days of transmitted messages for potential refile action. A 28-day "floppy" backup is also available.
3. Internet: Bureau Internet operators fed Soviet TV over the system overnight on 16 occasions during the month when the Headquarters dish was experiencing problems or undergoing maintenance/upgrade work.

E. Technical

1. A VHS videorecorder has been installed on the Internet system to allow bureau to send VHS video over Internet or to convert VHS videos to U-Mat format for transmission.
2. Bureau management, engineers and Communications Unit management held extensive talks with visiting Lockheed contractor [] STAT
GE contractor [] on proposed commo changes and problems these changes pose for existing operations and requirements. STAT
3. Bureau engineer [] at the behest of Headquarters, developed a new program for the line selector for Amman which will allow it to operate in ASCII. STAT
4. Bureau engineer [] has conducted a survey of all bureau software. A list has been compiled of permitted software and a bureau notice issued banning introduction of any new unapproved software into the bureau. STAT

III. ADMINISTRATION

Personnel

1. Bureau editor [redacted] well-deserved promotions to GS-11 effective 14 August. STAT received
2. Bureau electronic technician [redacted] received an equally well-deserved promotion to FBN 8/4 effective 28 August. STAT
3. Chief Editor-designate [redacted] and his family arrived PCS on 16 [redacted] will also become a member of the bureau staff in late September once the family has found housing and settled in. STAT
4. Bureau is still awaiting approval from Headquarters to implement a new FBN wagescale retroactive to 8 May. Once approval is received there will be a further waiting period to give RAMC Paris time to develop software to handle the bureau wagescale, Bureau staff have been fully briefed on all aspects of the proposed FBN scale. STAT
5. Chief/PMU completed testing/interviewing of three applicants for a Hungarian monitor position in Vienna and results were passed to Austria Bureau. Meanwhile, Admin Staff was kept busy coordinating medical clearances for Vienna candidates identified in an earlier recruiting campaign. STAT

IV. VISITS

To the bureau: [redacted] 2 and 3 August en route from Abidjan [redacted] view potential housing; LEC contractor [redacted] and GE contractor [redacted] August for bureau familiarization and communications discussions; two newly arrive Embassy political officers on 9 August for [redacted] tour and briefing; Headquarters watch officers [redacted] on 16 August for bureau tour [redacted] briefing; AG Research Branch officer [redacted] 29-31 August for bureau familiarization and discussions with Tabulations Unit. STAT

From the BBC: GMMS [redacted] 5-9 August for final talks with FBIS management before departure from Monitoring Service. STAT

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cc: Chief, Austria Bureau
Chief, Islamabad Unit
Chief, Okinawa Bureau